

3.0 Other Transportation Modes

The US-91 Corridor is used by several private and public transit operators that primarily provide bus service between communities and to various employers and schools. Additionally, several local government entities address alternative travel modes through goals and objectives in comprehensive or general plan documents.

3.1 Transit Providers

There are a number of private and public transit providers in the US-91 study area.

3.1.1 Private Transit Providers

Employee Services: The Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) operates a commuter bus service to its site west of Idaho Falls. Only employees and authorized contractors are eligible to ride the buses, which provide service along US-91.

Student, Faculty, and Staff Services: Idaho State University (ISU) offers service for students, faculty and staff to the university in Pocatello. The ISU commuter bus service operates a fleet of over-the-road coaches. Service is provided to outlying communities on scheduled fixed-routes and at peak times with morning pick-up between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m. and an afternoon return from ISU between 1:15 and 5:15 p.m. A pass must be purchased by a student from ISU, and used for the purpose of traveling to and from the University exclusively. The ISU bus stops in Blackfoot, Shelley, and Idaho Falls and runs only while school is in session. The service uses US-91.

K-12 Student Services: Local school districts provide school bus service for children in the school system from kindergarten through grade twelve. These buses use US-91 for their morning and afternoon routes, which generally terminate in the communities where schools are located and service the surrounding rural areas.

Social Service Provider Services: The Southeast Idaho Community Action Agency provides bus service to senior citizens through its system of volunteers on an as needed basis. The Blackfoot Senior Citizens Center offers a similar service. The Fort Hall Community Resources office which provides transportation to daily meals for Shoshone-Bannock Tribes tribal members.

Commercial Bus Services: Greyhound Bus offers daily service for residents with destinations throughout the United States. A regular stop is located in the City of Blackfoot but a prior phone call is needed to arrange for a pick-up. An on-demand "flag stop" is provided in the City of Shelley. Greyhound buses tend to use I-15.

CART Inc., based in Idaho Falls, offers a daily bus route from Shelley to Idaho Falls, leaving Shelley in the morning and returning to Shelley in the afternoon.

3.1.2 Public Transit Providers

Public transit providers include the Pocatello Regional Transit (PRT) and the Targhee Regional Public Transit Authority (PTA) in Idaho Falls.

The Pocatello Regional Transit (PRT), based in Pocatello, operates bus services to rural portions of Southeast Idaho, which include service to Shelley and Blackfoot along US-91. PRT provides commuter transportation from Pocatello to Blackfoot, operating Monday through Friday. PRT provides transportation

in Blackfoot for the general public within the city limits of Blackfoot from Monday through Friday. The cost is \$1 per trip and is a door to door type of service. Arrangements must be made at least one day in advance for the service. Trips that travel outside of the city limits of Blackfoot fall into the Contractual Rural Service. PRT also provides senior transportation for the surrounding areas, including Firth, Goshen, and Shelley in conjunction with the Shelley Senior Citizens activities.

Carpooling: The Ride-Link program is a carpooling program administered by Bannock Planning Organization. It provides information on carpooling and assists individuals in locating others who are interested in carpooling. Ride-Link also encourages other alternative commute modes such as bicycling and walking.

PTA serves the City of Idaho Falls with four buses covering four zones. PTA operates Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.. It uses designated stops but does not travel a fixed route. The buses may use US-91 (Yellowstone Highway) within the City of Idaho Falls but do not extend outside the city limits.

3.1.3 Transit Goals and Policies in Municipal and County Plans

Bannock County: Transportation goals include establishing a multi-modal transportation system that supports the County's role as the transportation and warehousing hub in the region. It also encourages development of bicycle lanes on functionally classified roads providing access to recreation areas as they are widened or improved. (Bannock County Second Century Comprehensive Plan, 1995-2020, Bannock County, May 31, 1995.)

Bingham County: The County Plan encourages mobility for all residents, reduction in single-occupant automobile use, and the development of a regional airport in Bingham County to serve many of the smaller communities without air service. Bicycle and pedestrian pathways are encouraged throughout Bingham County. (Bingham County Transportation Master Plan, undated.)

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes 2001 Comprehensive Transportation Plan indicates that the public have expressed a critical need for access to transportation through transit. The plan recommends that a Transit Demand Assessment and Program Design study be completed by the Tribes to provide a detailed inventory of existing transportation services on the Fort Hall Reservation, a needs assessment, and an examination of alternative ways to deliver transit services.

City of Blackfoot: The city has goals and objectives that promote various modes of alternative transportation (pedestrians and bicycles), that encourage a balanced transportation system, and that promote the development of a light rail system in southeast Idaho. (City of Blackfoot Comprehensive Plan, Planning for Today and Tomorrow 2000-2020, City of Blackfoot, 2000.)

City of Shelley: The city has goals and objectives that support all modes of transportation, encourages carpooling and bus services, and promotes the development of bicycle and pedestrian paths and lanes to encourage their use. (City of Shelley Comprehensive Plan, 2001-2021, Southeast Idaho Council of Governments, adopted May 8, 2001.)

City of Firth: The city's transportation goals and objectives include providing for parking for individuals using transportation services to and from INL, Idaho State University, Ricks College, and other destinations for school and work; and encourages increased transit services for seniors need to travel to and from Blackfoot, Pocatello, and Idaho Falls. (City of Firth Comprehensive Plan, July 1999)

3.2 Commercial Air Service

The nearest commercial airports are in Idaho Falls in the north and Pocatello in the south. Both are accessed via US-91 and I-15. The City of Blackfoot maintains a Municipal Airport (McCarley Field), which is used for business and recreation. There are no commercial or passenger flights from McCarley Field, though it can accommodate small jet aircraft.

Vehicle shuttle services to Salt Lake City International Airport and downtown Salt Lake City are provided by two operators – Salt Lake Express and Salt Lake Airport Shuttle Hop (S.L.A.S.H.). Both require advance reservations, and provide service to Pocatello, Blackfoot, and Idaho Falls.

3.3 Rail Service

The Union Pacific Railroad tracks parallel the east side of much of the US-91 corridor. Union Pacific provides regular rail service to industries in the project area but does not provide passenger service. The nearest public rail transportation is AMTRAK in Salt Lake City, Utah.

3.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

There are no designated bicycle facilities on US-91. Bicyclists wishing to use the highway generally must use the existing travel lanes and/or shoulders where provided. As described by corridor segment in Section 2.9, shoulder widths vary as shown below:

- 2 to 4 feet paved from Siphon Road to Sheepskin Road,
- 2 to 3 feet paved from Sheepskin Road to South Blackfoot I-15 Interchange,
- Generally 3 feet paved from the South Blackfoot I-15 Interchange through the City of Blackfoot to Airport Road,
- Variable from 3 to 5 feet from Airport Road to New Sweden Road with approximately 3 miles of US-91 without any shoulders, and
- 4 feet paved between New Sweden Road and York Road.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials ⁷ recommends a minimum shoulder width of 4 feet for bicycle use on rural highways.

Designated multi-use paths are provided in the Cities of Blackfoot and Shelley but these paths do not cross US-91. Pedestrian facilities along US-91 in the study area only occur in portions of the urbanized areas. Sidewalk facilities are not continuous and are generally not provided on the east side of US-91 where the Union Pacific railroad parallels the highway.

Representatives of bicycling groups stated a desire to have US-91 shoulder widths that would safely accommodate bicyclists.

Comments received from the general public indicate that pedestrian facilities are needed in the northern section of the City of Firth. Members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes identified a need for pedestrian facilities parallel to US-91 and crossing US-91 and the Union Pacific railroad in the Fort Hall town site. The Tribes indicate that school busing operations on US-91 contribute to school children crossing US-91 and the Union Pacific Railway at a variety of undesignated locations to access school buses. There are no sidewalks, signage or other accommodations for pedestrians to travel parallel to and to cross US-91 in the Fort Hall area.

⁷ American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 1999, page 19.